

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7738
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S E C R E T NAIROBI 8067

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL
SUBJ: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 134913

1. HOST GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA: KENYAN GOVERNMENT IS WESTERN ORIENTED, ADVOCATES AND PRACTICES FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, AND IS ANTI-COMMUNIST. NEVERTHELESS, SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA HAS CAUSED GOK NO APPARENT ANXIETY. ON CONTRARY, GOK WAS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF SOV/CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ETHIOPIA TO HELP EXPEL SOMALI INVADERS. AS DEPT AWARE, GOK IS VERY FEARFUL OF SOMALI MILITARY THREAT TO KENYA AND THIS IDENTIFIED WITH ETHIOPIA AND HER SOV/CUBAN ALLIES. KENYANS INTELLECTUALLY RECOGNISE DANGER TO THEIR OWN INTERNAL SECURITY THAT ENTRENCHED COMMUNIST REGIME IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, SUPPORTED BY SOV/CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE, WOULD POSE. BUT, NAIVELY PERHAPS, THEY ARGUE THAT GENUINE COMMUNISM CAN NEVER TAKE ROOT IN AFRICA AND SO PUSH THOUGHT FROM THEIR MINDS. KENYANS SEE NO SOV/CUBAN THREAT APART FROM THEIR COOPERATION WITH AFRICAN HOST GOVERNMENTS.

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THEY POINT OUT THAT SOVS/CUBANS HAVE ONLY COME IN WHERE THEY WERE INVITED AND HAVE QUIETLY LEFT WHEN THEY WERE TOLD TO GO, E.G., SOMALIA, EGYPT, SUDAN. RULING KENYAN CIRCLES MAY ALSO FEEL SENSE OF SECURITY SINCE THEY WERE ABLE FAIRLY EASILY TO CHECK CHALLENGE IN MID-SIXTIES POSED BY OGINGA ODINGA, KENYAN OPPOSITION LEADER, WHO ENJOYED SOME SOVIET AND CHINESE SUPPORT. FOR PAST SEVERAL YEARS SOVIETS IN KENYA

HAVE KEPT EXTREMELY LOW PROFILE AND HAVE BEHAVED THEMSELVES MOST CIRCUMSPECTLY.

2. THEIR DEFINITION OF ATTENDANT PROBLEMS: NONE. KENYANS CONCERN THEMSELVES VERY LITTLE WITH HYPOTHETICAL POLITICAL SITUATIONS WHICH DO NOT TOUCH KENYA.

3. THEIR PRESCRIPTION FOR HANDLING THE PROBLEMS: NONE.

4. KENYANS DO RECOGNIZE SOV/CUBAN PRESENCE IS A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE ISSUE AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES, SINCE SOME STATES, (E.G. IVORY COAST, GABON, ETC.) WILL STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY AFRICAN APPEAL FOR SOV/CUBAN ARMED ASSISTANCE. OTHERS, OBVIOUSLY, FEEL NEED FOR SOV/CUBAN HELP, AND SOME (KENYA) WILL REMAIN RELATIVELY INDIFFERENT AS LONG AS THEY THEMSELVES ARE NOT INVOLVED. KENYAN PRESCRIPTION IS: " IF YOU DON'T WANT THE SOVS/CUBANS, THEN YOU MUST ACT TO PREVENT SITUATIONS FROM ARISING IN WHICH A GOVERNMENT WILL FEEL IT NECESSARY TO CALL ON THEM FOR HELP". IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HORN THIS MEANT THAT IF WE HAD ACTED TO KEEP THE SOMALIS OUT OF THE OGADEN, THEN MENGISTU WOULD NOT HAVE NEEDED SOV/CUBAN MILITARY AID.
LE MELLE

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